U.S. WAR GAS PLANT BUSY ON FUMES TO SUFFOCATE OR BURN

Nevinson Writes of Trip to the World's Biggest Poison Works, Near Baltimore.

The following despatch to the Manchester Guardian from its staff correspondent in Washington is printed by The World under special arrangement:

By Henry W. Nevinson.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2.—Anticipating debates in the conference on the use of poison gas, I visited Wednesday America's poison gas works at Edgewood, half an hour beyond Baltimore, probably the greatest poison works in the world.

Edgewood is hardly even a village, except for the works, all of which were erected during the war. There is an enclosure of 10,000 acres for the factory on a promontory in Chesapeake Bay, having its own docks for lighters. The works were brought to the highest perfection just before the armistice and could then produce 300 tons of poison gas daily. Work is now going on at greatly reduced pressure, but the plant is maintained in complete readiness, with a permanent staff, machines in working order and the results continually inspected and tested separately.

Staffs for offense and defense are continually working against each other, every advance in poison being met, if possible, by protective methods such as new devices in masks to prevent death by suffocation or impregnable overalls to prevent death by burning.

On the French front our masks could be put on in six seconds. Here the mask can be put on in three by one single movement without ties. A notable device in glass goggles has been invented, the glass being constructed so that it can never splinter, even if it should break. Much improvement has been made also in the breathing tube and cylinder.

There are two hermetically sealed chambers into which the men volunteer to enter without extra payment to test the power of the gases. They are watched through a window until they signal upon feeling the effect in faintness or sickness.

Chlorine made from common table salt is the base for all poison gas except perhaps Lewisite. Salt is dissolved in enormous vats like iron foundries. Many kinds of gas are manufactured. The best for suffocation is called phosgene. Mustard gas burns the flesh off as well and penetrates the clothing, as was demonstrated during the war.

Chlorophierin produces intense vomiting, disabling until the enemy arrives to kill. Lachrymatory gas causes floods of tears and its effects are melodramatic, as I found upon approaching the factory. The smell is rather sweet, but the effect wears off if the sufferer survives the bayonet attack for which the gas is preparatory.

Lewisite is a burning gas like mustard gas, but its effect is far more powerful. It spreads slowly, unlike phosgene, which on that account is more favored for ordinary bombing from the air. But Lewisite could be sprayed upon cities, as with hose, from aircraft, with devastating effect, burning clothes, skin and flesh of all soldiers and citizens indifferently.

Large aircraft, each carrying several bombs or spraying machines, could easily destroy great cities if unopposed and gradually reduce the whole human population, rendering birth control unnecessary.

Most interesting was the museum on the premises illustrating the growth of various destructive chemical processes and attempts to counteract them. The whole factory proves what ingenuity has been expended for slaughter and the horror that would doubtless be involved in another war.

All attempts to check the employment of improved instruments of destruction have hitherto been vain, as proved at The Hague and in our protest against the use of poison gas in the late war. Perhaps this object can be furthered by increasing the terror for the stay-at-homes, elderly men and women, who would no longer give their sons only but themselves also.

I am now informed that Lewisite was invented by a man named Newlands at the Catholic University here and perfected by Prof. Lee Lewis of Northwestern University. It is composed of acetylene with a solution of arsenic trichloride. It is believed capable of penetrating any mask and passes through the flesh or down the lungs, burning the victim inside and outside. It is regarded as the main origin of security in case of future war. It was produced at the rate of ten dons daily at the time of the armistice.

French Officials Find Time to Visit Outside Washington

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2 (Associated Press).—Several members of the French arms delegation do not find much to occupy them at present in the conference and are taking the opportunity to visit nearby points outside Washington. Col. Roure, the present head of the military section of the delegation, with other French officers to-day will visit the Naval Academy at Annapolis and later will go to West Point.

M. Sarraut, the French Colonial Minister, will take a party to visit Niagara Falls.

IN THE REALM OF MUSIC

Vincent d'Indy, French Composer, Conducts New York Symphony Orchestra.

By Frank H. Warren.

A feature of yesterday's music was the appearance of Vincent d'Indy, French composer - conductor and founder of the Paris Schola Cantorum, as guest conductor of the New York Symphony Orchestra. Just sixteen years ago to a day Mr. d'Indy, on his first visit to America, performed the same service for the Boston Symphony. Excepting for a Mozart serenade of three movements, and an overture in classic form, by the Italian, Claudio Monteverde (1600), the programme represented mainly modern French schools. There was a Symphonic Poem—"To the Dead"—by Paul Le Flem, a Schola pupil of Mr. d'Indy's, that had its first performance here; "The Gods in the Shadows of the Cares," an extract from a Symphonic Suite, by Albert Roussel, another Schola product; and, to conclude, Mr. d'Indy's own new composition, "On the Shores of the Seas," in four sections, that received its world premiere. An earlier number was entitled "Music While the King Dines," dance by Lalando, a Frenchman who flourished around 1700.

Mr. d'Indy's selections might have had more substance than this outlay disclosed. Mozart's simple Serenade, an experiment in orchestration made when he was but twenty, had more spontaneity and charm than the remainder of the programme combined. Le Flem's Poem was a long dirge with only a bit of color to vary it, and Russell's "Gods in the Shadows" wandered about rather aimlessly. These pupils should have been kept in after Schola, as it were, and been made to listen to their compositions played ten times in succession. Mr. d'Indy's own work, portraying Tranquility and Light, the joy of the deep blue-green horizons and the mystery of the ocean, was nothing ingenious. The music flowed along in uneventful style and was as dry as the edge of a desert.

The concert will be repeated this evening, after which Mr. d'Indy will start on a round of guest conducting with neighboring orchestras. By the time he is ready to start for home he may have become a Yankee Doodle d'Indy.

There is something left for the jaded opera goer. The thing to do will be to drop in for the second act of "Tosca" when Jeritza sings. Mme. Jeritza is the blonde, statuesque Viennese dramatic and vocal thrill that the Metropolitan Opera Company imported to carry "Die Tote Stadt" to success. The newcomer got hold of a real part last night and, as Floria Tosca, created such commotion as one meets only at long intervals. It has been many operatic moons since a sensation similar to last evening's has been experienced by Metropolitan patrons. Mme. Jeritza's second act simply bowled them over. "Golden horseshoe," parterre, main floor, galleries, standees, employees, orchestra, associate artists all acknowledged the art of the new prima donna and exhausted themselves in telling her so.

When Jeritza sings Tosca she discards all such conventional appurtenances as wig, picture hat and staff. She is the tragic actress of the story, does everything in heroic, sincere, tragic style, with little subtlety or suggestion, carefully building up the role from a simple, unaffected entrance to the climatic killing of Scarpia. She dominates, and even Mr. Scotti was inspired to add fresh detail to a part long regarded as finished. The famous Vissi d'Arte aria, for instance, that usually comes as a halt in the rapid action. Mme. Jeritza begins prone on the floor, and, disregarding its possibilities for vocal display, makes every phrase interpret her torn and distracted feelings. This new twist was a revelation to the gasping majority. The continuous response of the audience, probably, reacted on the singers and led them to overdue the thing, at times, but nobody seemed to mind.

In the excitement one was open to overlook the debut of Aureliano Pertile, tenor, who appeared as Mario Cavaradossi. His voice can be better appraised later, but he seemed a competent actor, carried along on the electric wave propelled from the Jeritza battery.

For a real thriller—second act of "Tosca"—when Jeritza sings.